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State of Minnesota
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-FIFTH
SESSION

HOUSE FILE No. **626**

February 5, 2007

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The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Finance

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to higher education; establishing the academic competitiveness
1.3 highlighting individual excellence and valuing education scholarship program;
1.4 proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 136A.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. [136A.127] ACADEMIC COMPETITIVENESS HIGHLIGHTING
1.7 INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE AND VALUING EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP
1.8 PROGRAM.

1.9 Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** The academic competitiveness highlighting
1.10 individual excellence and valuing education (ACHIEVE) scholarship program is
1.11 established.

1.12 Subd. 2. **Purpose.** The purpose of ACHIEVE scholarships is to reward Minnesota
1.13 students for taking rigorous courses in high school.

1.14 Subd. 3. **Program goal.** The goal of the program is to encourage more low- and
1.15 moderate-income Minnesota students to take rigorous college-level academic courses in
1.16 high school and provide them with resources to help pay for postsecondary education.
1.17 Students who take these courses are more likely to attend and graduate from postsecondary
1.18 institutions.

1.19 Subd. 4. **Definition; qualifying course.** For the purposes of this section, a
1.20 "qualifying course" means a course that is equivalent to at least one course credit in high
1.21 school, as defined in section 120B.024, and that is one of the following:

1.22 (1) advanced placement courses or international baccalaureate courses under section
1.23 120B.13;

2.1 (2) for students who took an advanced placement or international baccalaureate
 2.2 examination but not a high school course, the number of courses equivalent to credits
 2.3 earned by taking advanced placement or international baccalaureate examinations under
 2.4 section 120B.13, subdivision 3a;

2.5 (3) postsecondary enrollment options courses and programs under section 124D.09;

2.6 (4) concurrent enrollment courses under section 124D.09, subdivision 10;

2.7 (5) college in the schools courses under section 124D.09, subdivision 10;

2.8 (6) the number of courses equivalent to credits earned via the college-level
 2.9 examination program under section 120B.131; or

2.10 (7) the number of courses equivalent to credits earned via work-based learning
 2.11 programs under section 124D.4531, 124D.46, 124D.47, or 124D.49.

2.12 The courses count toward the scholarship whether or not the postsecondary
 2.13 institution grants postsecondary credit for them.

2.14 Subd. 5. **Documentation of qualifying courses.** The student shall request a
 2.15 transcript from the high school. The high school shall provide a transcript to the Office
 2.16 of Higher Education documenting the qualifying courses the student took. High schools
 2.17 shall certify on the transcript which courses on the transcript are qualifying courses and
 2.18 provide a total number of qualifying courses for each student.

2.19 Subd. 6. **Review panel.** The director of the office shall appoint a review panel to
 2.20 monitor the implementation of ACHIEVE scholarships. The review panel may assist the
 2.21 director in examining appeals of whether high school courses qualify for the scholarships.
 2.22 The review panel shall include representatives of public and private high schools and
 2.23 postsecondary institutions. This subdivision expires June 30, 2008.

2.24 Subd. 7. **Student eligibility.** To be eligible to receive a scholarship under this
 2.25 section, in addition to the requirements listed under section 136A.121, a student must:

2.26 (1) take qualifying courses or earn credits equivalent to courses in grades 9 through
 2.27 12 in a Minnesota high school, or be home-schooled pursuant to section 120A.22, and
 2.28 graduate from high school;

2.29 (2) have a family adjusted gross income in the last complete calendar year prior to
 2.30 the academic year of postsecondary attendance of less than \$100,000;

2.31 (3) be a United States citizen or eligible noncitizen as defined in section 484 of the
 2.32 Higher Education Act, United States Code, title 20, sections 1091 et seq., as amended, and
 2.33 Code of Federal Regulations, title 34, section 668.33; and

2.34 (4) be a Minnesota resident as defined in section 136A.101, subdivision 8.

2.35 Subd. 8. **Administration.** ACHIEVE scholarships shall be administered by the
 2.36 Minnesota Office of Higher Education.

3.1 Subd. 9. **Documentation of qualifying family income.** The parents of the students
3.2 must document a qualifying family income by declaration on the application stating that
3.3 they meet the income requirement. The Office of Higher Education or the postsecondary
3.4 institution may request copies of federal individual income tax returns as documentation.

3.5 Subd. 10. **Scholarships awards.** Minnesota ACHIEVE scholarships shall consist of
3.6 \$314 per qualifying course taken while the student attended a Minnesota high school. The
3.7 scholarships may be used to pay for qualifying expenses at eligible institutions.

3.8 Subd. 11. **Qualifying expenses.** Qualifying expenses are components included
3.9 under the cost of attendance used for federal student financial aid programs as defined
3.10 in section 472 of the Higher Education Act, United States Code, title 20, sections 1091
3.11 et seq., as amended.

3.12 Subd. 12. **Eligible institutions.** Eligible institutions are MnSCU institutions,
3.13 University of Minnesota campuses, Minnesota not-for-profit institutions, and Minnesota
3.14 degree-granting for-profit institutions. Private institutions must either be accredited
3.15 or registered or licensed with the Office of Higher Education and participating in the
3.16 Minnesota state grant program.

3.17 Subd. 13. **Availability of scholarship funds.** Each scholarship is available for
3.18 up to four academic years immediately following high school graduation. After that
3.19 date, the scholarship is no longer available to the student. The office must certify to the
3.20 commissioner of finance by October 1 of each year the amounts to be canceled from
3.21 scholarship eligibility that has expired.

3.22 Subd. 14. **Disbursement of scholarships.** The office shall provide payment to the
3.23 postsecondary institution on behalf of the student.

3.24 Subd. 15. **Authority to adopt rules.** The Minnesota Office of Higher Education
3.25 may adopt rules to administer the program.